

*Grassy, tree-shaded areas evoke a quieter time, an era when the American dream might be found in a leafy evergreen grove heavy with golden fruit.*



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The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state's extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation.



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Discover the many states of California.™

**California Citrus  
State Historic Park**

**1879 Jackson Street**

**Riverside, California 92504**

**(951) 780-6222**

# California Citrus State Historic Park



## Visitors to California Citrus State

**Historic Park** are greeted at the park entrance by a replica of an old-fashioned roadside fruit stand. This charming “big orange” structure, on the corner of Van Buren Boulevard and Dufferin Avenue in Riverside, recalls an era that forever changed the landscape of Southern California. The park dedicates nearly half of its 377 acres to what was once the universal symbol of California’s role in agriculture—the citrus groves.

Of all the crops that constitute California’s agricultural legacy, juicy golden oranges

conjured an image of romance, prosperity and abundance. Warm, dry summers and cool, moist winters provide perfect growing conditions. Between the late 1800s and the early 1900s, the groves spread across Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, Los Angeles and Ventura counties, and the Central Valley. This second California “gold rush,” combined with innovative methods of irrigation, fruit processing, advertising, cooperative marketing and railroad transportation, help establish California’s image as the land of sunshine and opportunity.



*Orange stand, Van Buren Blvd. and Dufferin Ave.*

## NATIVE PEOPLE

The area that is now Riverside County was inhabited for centuries by diverse native peoples, including Serrano, Luiseño, Gabrielino, Cupeño, Chemehuevi and Cahuilla. Villages of a few extended families moved seasonally following their food

resources. Creeks, as well as hunting and food gathering areas, were “owned” by the entire village. Personal property consisted of utensils, tools and hunting and food preparing equipment. Game included deer, quail, rabbits, lizards and other reptiles.

Cahuilla people were the first laborers

in the citrus groves and helped construct the early waterworks. However, only a few Indians were available to work, and this, combined with the prejudice they encountered, led to a decline in their presence in the citrus industry.

## CREATING THE CITRUS INDUSTRY

The mission padres planted the first Mediterranean varieties on the grounds of Mission San Gabriel around 1803. Emigrant Kentucky trapper William Wolfskill developed more acreage from seedlings

he obtained in 1841. In the mid-to-late 1800s, lemon, lime and orange trees grew in today’s downtown Los Angeles. Then, in 1873, Mrs. Eliza Tibbets of Riverside obtained two young Bahia, or Washington navel orange trees, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Brazilian native orange was sweeter and more flavorful, had no seeds, and its thick, easily-peeled skin protected it during shipping. Today nearly all of the Washington navel orange trees grown in California are descended from these two original trees, one of which still grows at the intersection of Riverside’s Arlington and Magnolia Avenues.



*Harvesting oranges, ca. 1900*

## THE WORKFORCE

In the late 1800s Chinese workers hired by Chinese labor contractors replaced the native people. By 1885 nearly 80 percent of the labor force was Chinese. Their considerable horticultural skills and knowledge made citriculture enormously successful. However, a climate of anti-Chinese sentiment, as well as the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, caused their numbers to dwindle.

With fewer Chinese available, Japanese immigrants moved in to fill the need. By 1900 Riverside's citrus industry employed about 3,000 Japanese workers, hired through Japanese labor contractors. Between 1900 and 1920, Japanese were the largest labor group in the citrus industry. However, anti-immigrant sentiment also drove them out. Around 1919 Hispanic workers began to arrive,

along with other immigrant nationalities. They came with their families and formed communities wherever they worked. By the mid-1940s, Hispanics constituted approximately two-thirds of the citrus industry's labor force. Women were the mainstay in the packing houses.



*Restoring a citrus landscape*

## IRRIGATION— THE GAGE CANAL

Lured by land promoters and Southern California railroads, the dreams of large and small investors took root in the California soil. Riverside, a pioneer agricultural settlement, was established in

1870 by the Southern California Colony Association. To quell conflicts over water, the newly formed Riverside Water Company began an irrigation canal between the Santa Ana River and Riverside. In order to gain title to 640 acres on which he had filed a claim, Canadian jeweler Matthew Gage was

given three years to bring water to the land. Between 1885 and 1889, he built a canal 11.91 miles long from the Santa Ana River in San Bernardino and later extended it an additional 8.22 miles. The flume of the original canal (later replaced by

the Mockingbird Canyon Dam) crossed Mockingbird Canyon. The canal doubled the citrus-producing area of Riverside and still supplies water to local citrus ranches and the groves of California Citrus State Historic Park.

Between 1891 and 1893, growers united to form

cooperative organizations for marketing citrus. By 1908 a partnership between the California Fruit Growers Exchange (later Sunkist) and the Southern Pacific Railroad launched advertising campaigns to promote the sale of citrus in the Midwest and Eastern U.S. markets. Among the most enduring creations of the citrus industry were crate labels. Though packing companies



*Packing house*

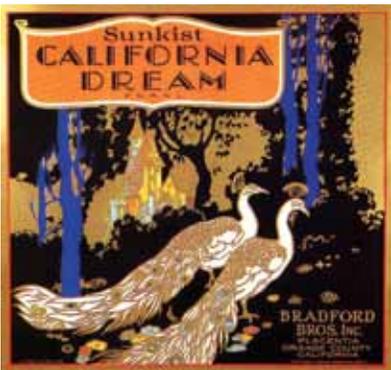


*Packing house, ca. 1900*

introduced the labels to identify their particular products, buyers soon began ordering fruit by specific labels. The labels, designed by some of the era's best artists, became more and more ornate—reaching their peak between 1900 and 1930. Today these works are collectible, garnering top dollar for rare originals in prime condition.

### TODAY AND BEYOND

California Citrus State Historic Park opened in August 1993 as a living historical museum reflecting the citrus industry heritage. The 186 acres of citrus groves managed by the California Citrus Non-Profit Management Corporation produce navel and Valencia oranges, grapefruit and lemons. Revenues generated under a nonprofit management agreement help fund new facilities and



*Artistic crate label*

programs, and maintain the citrus groves in the park. The income-producing groves also provide a backdrop for the palm-

tree-lined trails, walkways, entry way and picnic areas. The Varietal Grove features at least 75 varieties of citrus. The Visitor Center/Museum—open Saturdays, Sundays and Wednesdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.—has exhibits on the significance of the citrus industry as well as a



*Tour group at orange sizer*

gift shop. Visitors may take self-guided tours daily. Call the park to schedule guided school or group tours.

This “park within a park” reflects building design and landscaping of the early 1900s, with Craftsman/California Bungalow-style structures. Grassy,

tree-shaded areas evoke a quieter time, an era when the American Dream might be found in a leafy evergreen grove heavy with golden fruit. Future re-creation of the key components of a complete citrus-producing community circa 1880-1935 will include:

- an operating packing shed;
- a laborers' camp;
- a wealthy grower's home serving as a restaurant, conference area and interpretive exhibit;
- an early citrus settlement with water and land offices, a boarding house and a citrus pavilion; and
- a pedestrian “water flume” bridge.



### NATURAL FEATURES

The terrain is somewhat hilly, with elevations ranging from 920 to 1,060 feet above sea level. The Mockingbird Canyon arroyo—a drainage tributary to the Santa Ana River—bisects the park, abutting foothills to the south. Approximately one-third of the park remains unchanged by the citrus industry. The most common native growth along the river bottom wash of Mockingbird Canyon is willows and mule fat scrub. Non-native plant species such as eucalyptus and giant reed also exist here. Typical species in the upland portions of the canyon include California sagebrush, several species of buckwheat, blue elderberry, miner's lettuce, nightshade and desert thorn.



*Visitor Center*



*Red-tailed hawk*

## WILDLIFE

Though the natural ecosystem has been affected by the citrus industry, the reservoir and year-round irrigation water attract waterfowl and other species that would normally

only visit seasonally. The dry wash area of Mockingbird Canyon shelters brush rabbits, California ground squirrels and bobcats. Raccoons, striped skunks, kangaroo rats and coyotes are also found here. Red-tailed hawks, California quail, hummingbirds and roadrunners are common.

## RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

- The Sunkist Center, set in citrus groves and rose gardens next to a courtyard and gazebo, is available for weddings, reunions, special events and meetings. Call the park for details.

- The group picnic area typifies the look and ambience of the pre-World War II period—peaceful, natural and conducive to family picnicking and strolling under the trees. An outdoor amphitheater and interpretive gazebo provide a backdrop for open-air presentations and a summer concert series. Call the park for reservations, availability and fee information.

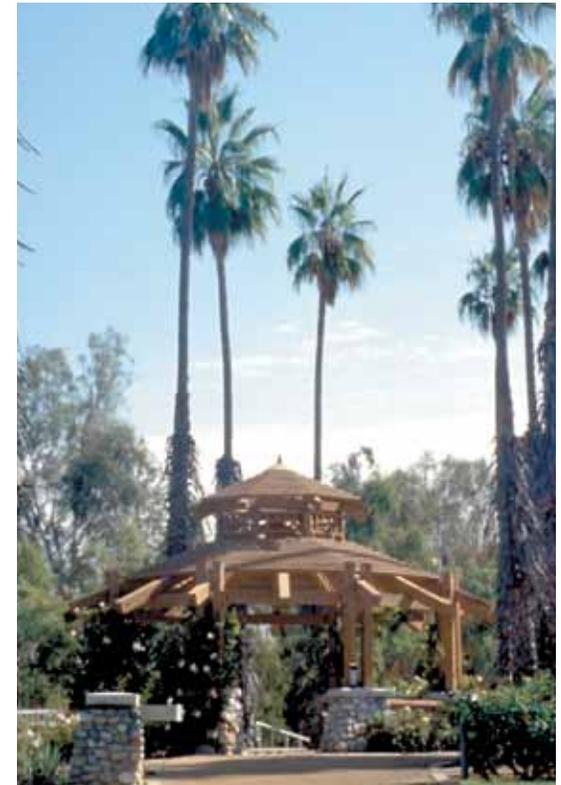
## ACCESSIBLE FEATURES

- The Sunkist Center building and its restrooms, benches and drinking fountain at the adjoining gazebo (approaches may require some assistance)
- The restroom and drinking fountains in the picnic area
- The drinking fountain and the stage area in the interpretive gazebo/amphitheater
- Decomposed granite walkways—some routes between points are from 200 to 400 feet long

Accessibility is continually improving. Call the park for the latest information or visit <http://access.parks.ca.gov>

## NEARBY STATE PARKS

- Chino Hills State Park, 4.5 miles north of junction of Highways 71 and 91 (951) 780-6222
- Lake Perris State Recreation Area, 11 miles south of Riverside (951) 940-5603/5608



*Gazebo and rose garden*

## PLEASE REMEMBER

- Park hours are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. year-round.
- Alcohol is not allowed in the park except by special event permit only.
- All features of the park are protected by law. Visitors may sample citrus fruit only on interpretive tours, and the taking of fruit, plants or trees is prohibited.
- Stay on designated trails and paths at all times.
- Access to Working Citrus Groves is prohibited. Please stay out of these work areas.
- Dogs must be on a leash no longer than six feet and must be under control at all times.



*Miss California and Iowa Boy statue*

This park receives support in part from a nonprofit organization. For more information, contact: California Citrus State Historic Park Non-Profit Management Corporation P.O. Box 21292 Riverside, CA 92516

